

CHARLES DICKENS

Charles Dickens (1812-1870)

Charles Dickens had an unhappy childhood. That experience marked him for ever.

After the success of *The pickwick Papers*, humorous stories about a group of eccentrics who met to recount their adventures, Dickens started a full-time career as a novelist.

The protagonist of his autobiographical novels, *Oliver Twist*, *David Copperfield*, *Little Dorrit* became the symbols of an exploited childhood (un'infanzia sfruttata) confronted with the grim and bitter realities (con le realtà amare e cupe) of slums and factories (delle baraccopoli e delle fabbriche).

Characters

Dickens describes characters, habits and language of the middle and lower classes in modern London. He was always on the side of the poor, the outcast, and also the working class.

A didactic aim

Children are often the most important characters in Dickens's novels. Children are the moral teachers, models of the way people ought to behave towards one another. Dickens's task was never to induce the most wronged and suffering to rebel.

Dickens's narrative

Dickens was first and foremost a storyteller (narratore). His novels were influenced by the Bible, fairy tales, fables, nursery rhymes (filastrocche). His plots are well-planned even if at times they sound a bit artificial, sentimental and episodic.

Publication in monthly or weekly instalments (giornali mensili o settimanali) discouraged unified plotting (una trama unitaria) and created pressure on Dickens to conform to the public taste (ai gusti del pubblico).

London was the settings of most of his novels. Dickens rejects the principles on which an industrial society is based: money and individualism. He is critical toward his society.